

Children's Administration (CA) June 2012 Washington State Extended Foster Care (EFC) Program Question & Answer

What is the Extended Foster Care program?

The Extended Foster Care program allows eligible youth to remain in out-of-home care up to age 21 while they pursue their high school or general equivalency diploma (GED), college or other postsecondary educational program.

Who is eligible for Extended Foster Care Program?

- A dependent youth in foster care on their 18th birthday **and** enrolled in a high school or GED program, **or**
- A dependent youth in foster care on their 18th birthday that has obtained their high school diploma or GED **and** has applied to a college or vocational program **or** has demonstrated intent to timely enroll into a college or vocational program.
- Dependent youth under a tribal court order where the Tribe's dependency code defines child ages 18 to 21.

When is a youth considered to be "in foster care"?

- A youth is in foster care when they are in an out-of-home placement under the authority of CA. Placements include; relative care, foster homes, group care, or other suitable persons.
***Note:** A youth who is temporarily away from a placement in (a) a hospital, (b) a drug/alcohol treatment facility, (c) a mental health treatment facility; or (d) in a county detention center is considered to be in foster care. This includes a youth who is temporarily away from placement without permission of CA, but who is expected to return to foster care within 20 days.*

When is a youth considered to "not be in foster care"?

- Placed with a parent;
- In a dependency guardianship;
- Committed to a Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) institution or Department of Corrections (DOC) facility;
- Absent from placement without permission of CA for more than 20 consecutive days.

Who is not eligible to participate in EFC Program?

- Youth who are not enrolled in an educational program or planning on attending college on their 18th birthday.
- Youth on a "Voluntary Plan for Continued Placement and Services"
- ICPC youth from another state

Does a youth who is 18 and participating in the EFC Program have their dependency dismissed by the court?

No, the dependency remains in place until the youth turns 21 or no longer participating in the EFC Program.

If the eligible youth elects to participate in the EFC Program, will foster care payments and services remain in place?

Yes, if the youth elects to participate, CA will continue to provide ongoing foster care payments and services up to age 21. This includes unpaid relative placements who can continue to receive TANF benefits.

Does a youth have to participate in the EFC program?

No, this is a voluntary program. The law requires the court to postpone the dismissal of the dependency for six months – from age 18 until the youth is 18½ years old. If the youth does not request to participate within the six-month trial independence period, the dependency is dismissed and extended foster care is no longer available to the youth.

***Trial Independence** is a period of time, up to six months, during which an eligible youth who did not elect to participate in extended foster care on their 18th birthday, may change their mind and participate in the program. CA is relieved of all supervisory and placement responsibility for the youth.*

What are the EFC Program rules for youth participating?

Youth will;

- Sign and follow the rules of the DSHS-10-432 Extended Foster Care Agreement
- Remain in a court approved placement
- Remain in school
- Participate in case planning and the dependency review court process
- Authorize CA to access the relevant medical, mental health, drug/alcohol treatment and educational records

When does a youth no longer qualify for the EFC Program?

- On their 21st birthday
- Does not participate or enroll educational program
- Does not participate in foster care services
- Fails or refuses to comply with the Extended Foster Care Agreement
- Placed in an adult detention facility with a criminal conviction

Is a youth participating in the EFC Program considered an adult?

The participant is a “child” for the purposes of the dependency action only; otherwise the participant has the legal status and legal rights of an adult. They are responsible for their actions, including responsibility for driving, traveling or financial obligations.

Do I complete a Family Assessment on youth participating in Extended Foster Care?

The Family Assessment is not currently designed to accommodate this population of youth. Until a fix is put in place to include these youth workers do not need to complete the Family Assessment process. ISSP must be completed every 6 months on these cases.

What needs to be documented in FAMLINK for a youth entering or exiting the EFC Program?

The documentation process is located on the CA Homepage labeled **FamLink K Web**. Click on the link to view: [Extended Foster Care Trial Independence Quick Help Guide](#).

- Questions? Please contact Jim Pritchard, Program Manager at prji300@dshs.wa.gov or call 360-902-8487.